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is in the last stages of decay, and the carriages are usually overrun with soldiers, Honan being one of the military reservoirs of man power for the Northern armies. The plain of the Lo Ho in early April, covered with vividly green winter wheat and dotted with pink and white fruit trees, all against the background of everlasting brown loess, forms a striking picture. The loess scenery between Cheng Chou and Kung Hsien is most remarkable, and the tourist who wishes to see a good example of this weird formation, with its perpendicular precipices and chasms, need not go further afield than this corner of N.E. Honan.

From Honan Fu a construction train, consisting of a string of open trucks packed with Chinese clinging like flies to every available spot, crawls slowly through the loess, which gradually gives way to reddish hills, past the little city of Miench'ih Hsien to the village of Kuanyint'ang, where the famous Lung Hai railway comes to an abrupt end, as though aghast at the appalling distances ahead. Immediately in front is a mountain range which will presumably have to be tunnelled to reach Shen Chou on the Yellow River. No more construction work has been undertaken at the time of writing, though surveys have been made up to Lanchou Fu. It is said that the plans allow for over 40 kilometers of tunnels before that place is reached. The concession is a Belgian one. The sight of the swarms of Chinese packed into the string of open trucks running backwards and forwards on this incomplete section testifies to the popularity of railway travel on this road and to the great number of travellers.

At Kuanyint'ang the traveller must hire carts or pack mules for the journey to Hsian. The latter are preferable, especially if it is likely to rain, as the mud in the loess cuttings on this much travelled road defies description. If the traveller has not brought his own ponies, a mule litter (*chiaowotzu* or *shantzu*) is a necessary accessory to a train of pack mules. This is a rough litter made of sticks and matting in which the passenger reclines carried by two mules, and is not likely to appeal to a foreigner as a pleasant method of travel. A Chinese is satisfied to be carried like a recumbent log in this contrivance for weeks on end, emerging at intervals for his meals; but the more active-

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minded foreigner is apt to find it intensely wearisome. A pony which can pace a little (the five mile an hour amble, in Chinese, *tsou*) provides on the whole the least tiring method of travel in the North Western provinces; chairs are little used except in the Southern portions, and always entail trouble in getting bearers. We used ponies and pack mules throughout our journeys.

Leaving Kuanyint'ang there is a drop into a ravine and then a stiff climb of a few hundred feet to reach the pass over a range of mountains, the watershed between the Lo and Yellow rivers. This ridge is really the end of one of the principal ranges of the Ch'inling Shan, the one which runs east and west right across Shensi immediately south of the Wei River. From the pass the road descends through undulating country to the township of Changmao Chen, where one is once more in the loess. From here it crosses a loess plateau, with typical valley rifts on either side, finally descending for the last mile to the village of Tzuchung. Changmao and Tzuchung, called 40 and 65 li from Kuanyint'ang respectively, are both used as stages for halts, but if the journey to Hsian is to be done in good time it is best to try and reach Shen Chou, another 50 li further on, on the first day's march. The road descends through deep loess cuttings to reach the latter, a little city on the banks of the Yellow River.

The traffic on this road is immense and an almost constant stream of carts and pack mules, laden mostly with cotton and hides on their way from Shensi to the coast, is met. In wet weather the mud is appalling; in dry weather the dust is if anything worse. There may be a happy mean, but the traveller who strikes it can consider himself lucky. The first time we travelled this road was in the mud; the second time, during the dry weather in early April, in the dust. In such weather the road is entirely hidden in vast clouds of dust in which the traffic is permanently shrouded. Those who have had experience of loess dust, which is so fine that it can be almost rubbed into the pores of the skin, will know what this means. The horseman can sometimes get away from the main road and its ankle-deep layer of dust by following small paths through the fields; but the passengers in carts and mule litters have to put up with it

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PLATE II

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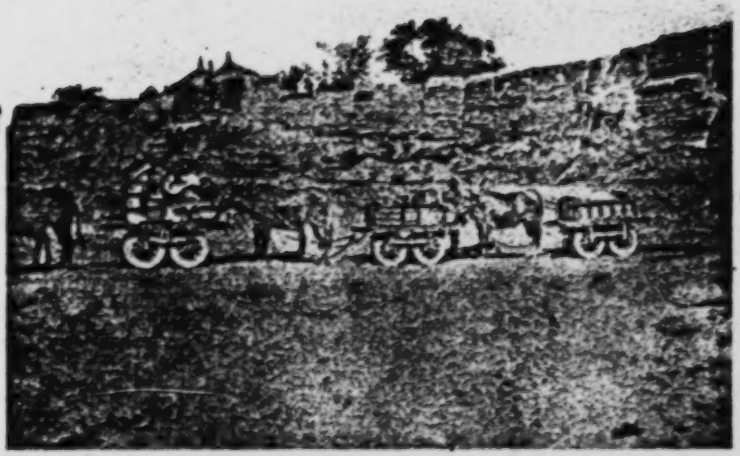

FOUR-WHEELED OX CARTS NEAR T'UNGKUAN

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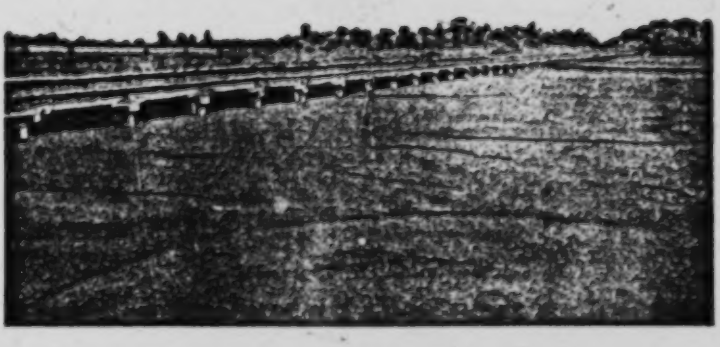

STONE BRIDGE ON THE ROAD TO HSIAN FU

[Facing p. 5]

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a correspondingly important part in Chinese history. In more recent days too, during the troubles since the fall of the Manchus in 1911, it has once more figured prominently in the manœuvres of Imperial, Revolutionary, and Republican armies, brigands, and train bands, while in times of peace it lends itself admirably, flanked as it is by river and mountain, to the levying of likin and other barrier tolls dear to the Chinese official. It is a compact little place, with ramparts and gates remarkable for their massive size even in China, the land of walls, overlooking the Yellow River, which pouring down from the north in a turgid yellow flood here strikes the Ch'inling Shan and turns sharply to the east.

As we approached T'ungkuan some one noticed three strange pack mules which had attached themselves to our caravan. Enquiries elicited the fact that they belonged to a merchant who was endeavouring to smuggle three loads of Price's candles through the frontier barrier into Shensi by this means. We had unwillingly to cut him adrift. Unless accompanied by transit passes goods in transport through the interior of China are taxed again and again at every point where a barrier can be erected until the prospective profit on their sale is eaten up by these tolls and their further transport becomes futile.

From the railhead at Kuanyint'ang to T'ungkuan is called a distance of 280 li, and can be done in three days. As far as Lingpao the li are "short li"; thence to T'ungkuan they are "long li"; the difference is most marked, the short and the long li averaging about a quarter and a third of a mile respectively. This absurd and typically Chinese arrangement is said to be due to the fact that the authorities of Honan Fu endeavoured in days gone by to lay claim to the fortress of T'ungkuan on the ground that it was nearer to their city than to Hsian Fu.

A peculiar four-wheeled cart of prehistoric appearance is used round T'ungkuan, the only place in China where I have seen a four-wheeled native vehicle. Even the huge carts which one meets on the grasslands of the Mongolian border or in the sands of Western Kansu, regular ships of the desert, and often accommodating whole families, are always of the familiar two-wheeled type.

From T'ungkuan to Hsian is a distance of 290 li, which

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plain. The excuses were unnecessary, as we had throughout raised objections to the size of the party. Carts, which we had not seen since leaving T'ungkuan, were sent to meet us here in case anyone should want them, and the prospect of a return to Hsian reclining in a cart, after scrambling up and down the mountains on foot for so many days, was as attractive to them as a passage in a train *de luxe* would be to a travel-worn European. To me a journey in a Chinese cart is a hideously uncomfortable method of travel, unless it be across absolutely smooth Mongolian grass lands. A Chinese cart travels along a Chinese paved road with a series of bumps sounding like gunshots, which rapidly reduce a European to pulp, but apparently have no effect on a Chinese.

From Hsink'outzu to Chouchih Hsien, a distance of 30 li, the track descends across an undulating plain, which in spring is one vast wheat-field dotted with hamlets and the walled farms peculiar to the Shensi plains. Chouchih, a first class Hsien city and the centre of one of the rich agricultural districts of the Wei valley, lies a few li to the south of the Wei River. It is a regular northern city compared to the crowded little towns of the Han valley, and consists of little more than one long dusty street, open and empty looking. Wheat and cotton are the staples; a little coarse silk is produced, the cocoon season being in full swing at the time of our visit during the latter half of May. The two characters for Chouchih are rather unusual ones, and mean "the winding of mountain streams," which appears to refer to the Hei Ho and its tributaries which flow down from Fop'ing and T'aipai Shan through deep winding gorges to the plains. The district, like all those of Central Shensi, is a very ancient one, dating back to the beginnings of Chinese history. We were as usual quartered in the magistrate's yamen, which happened to be in an unusually good state of repair and provided most comfortable accommodation. A study of the archives of these district yamens of Central Shensi would doubtless prove of great interest to the historian, since, where they have not been destroyed during the revolution or the White Wolf rebellion, they date back to very ancient days.

From Chouchih we turned westwards and travelled across the plain to Mei Hsien, a distance of 100 li. The

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It is suggested that the Chinese might with advantage borrow the services of some officers from the Survey of India and proceed to the triangulation of the whole country. The results, at any rate in Kansu and parts of Shensi, would be surprising. Amongst many other interesting facts which would be brought to light are the actual heights of the snow-clad mountains on the western borders of Kansu and Szechuan, some of which probably equal or surpass all but the highest giants of the Himalayas.

Min Chou (now Min Hsien) is a small city with busy suburbs situated on the right bank of the T'ao River at the point where the latter, flowing down from the Kokonor mountains in the west, makes a sharp right-angle turn to the north. The altitude is about 7500 feet. The T'ao River valley, here nearly a mile wide in places, is very fertile, and produces wheat, barley, beans, hemp, etc. Like T'ao Chou and Hsiku, Min Chou is a centre for the Chinese trade with the Tibetan inhabitants of the Kokonor country further west. A rough cart built entirely of wood with remarkably high wheels and drawn by the half-bred yak is used round Min Chou, on the roads to T'ao Chou, on the grasslands round the latter, and in other border parts of the province. I mention this cart because it is obviously very useful and because it is quite unusual to find wheeled traffic of any kind in such mountainous country in China; its introduction into the Tibetan inhabited plateau west of Tachienlu in Szechuan would revolutionise transport in that region.

Leaving Min Chou the road runs along the right bank of the T'ao River for ten L., and then crosses to the left bank by a ferry, the bridge having been destroyed at the time of the White Wolf raid. The river is here in the summer about 80 yards wide, six to eight feet deep, and very rapid. Navigation is confined to rafts of lumber down stream. From the ferry the path continues up the valley for three to four hours' march to the village of Hsitachai. The T'ao River valley is in this neighbourhood one of the most attractive regions in Kansu, or perhaps in China, being fertile and well cultivated, and bounded on the southern side by forest-clad mountains, the foothills of the great Min Shan. The river flows much of the way in a narrow

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a Moslem regiment from distant Kansu—marching whither? At that time, mercifully, we were not aware of what atrocities such men were capable; but on that journey the Hand that led protected.

CHAPTER II

SIAN TO PINGLIANG

THE beauties of Sian have been too often and too well described to need any mention of them here, much as we enjoyed our visits to the Mosque, the Nestorian Tablet, and other monuments of historical interest. After a short stay our litters were hired for the eighteen stages which lay between us and Lanchow, the provincial capital of Kansu. Our experience of this mode of travel in Shansi was considerable, and in view of the many minor accidents with which we had met, it was no satisfaction to us to find that in this case the matting-covered body of the litter was set high over the backs of the mules, instead of hanging between them, as those had been to which we were accustomed. 'It is for greater safety in the bad mountain roads,' was the reason given, but the knowledge that in the case of a probable overturn we were farther from the ground, brought little comfort. The well of the litter was ballasted with our boxes, and over these were laid the bed-bags, containing our wadded quilts. Cushions, rugs, lunch baskets, and all the miscellaneous articles which can be classed as 'hand-luggage,' were slung into the back of that portion reserved for our personal accommodation, in hope that these varied and incongruous objects would, somehow or other, amalgamate into a solid support for our weary frames. There was,

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bridge has replaced the old bridge-of-boats, which until quite recently spanned the great flood. Green sedan-chairs, we found, were still used by the officials, and the Yamens still retained the grand style which had existed under the Manchu Government—a pomp which entirely vanished from Shansi with the entry of the Republic, and has also since passed from Kansu, with the arrival of Marshal Feng's armies. We spent three weeks in Lanchow, staying most of the time in the central China Inland Mission compound, but paying visits to the Borden Hospital on the further bank of the river, and to the large boys' school at the foot of the Blue Lotus Hills, both of which are under the auspices of the China Inland Mission, which is the only society working in Lanchow. The whole visit was brimful of interest, and we were particularly struck with the way in which the Christian community had impressed itself on the civic life of the town.

The great Yellow River, during summer months, supplies a waterway by which the journey to Peking may be accomplished in about thirty days by raft. These rafts are floated by means of inflated goat and bullock skins, which are roped together and carried very swiftly down-stream. Though the journey is popular, being quicker and easier than if taken by road, yet the element of danger is always present, and Dr. George King, at whose hospital we stayed when in Lanchow, was drowned in May 1927 when travelling by this route. His raft caught on a sandbank, and in helping the men to release it, he fell into the water and was swept away.

During the winter months the river is frozen over and can be crossed on foot. When the stream is freezing, and while it is thawing, the toll of accidents is always heavy. During the whole of our stay the surface of the

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cultivating a small patch of ground. The women wore their hair in a number of small plaits, Tibetan fashion, but their features were more refined than are the Tibetans, and they impressed us as being most intelligent.

We returned to Kanchow over a road which lay between poppy fields now filled with gaunt, naked, dry poppy heads from which the juice had been extracted. By the roadside, at small tables on which were piles of silver, and scales to weigh it out, sat the buyers of crude opium, and before them squatted groups of farmers haggling and quarrelling over the price of the bowls of thick, brown juice—the tragic harvest of their fields. The two months which we were able to give to Kanchow passed only too rapidly, and as we were planning an extensive missionary journey for the early autumn we were obliged to start again for Suchow. We had only reached the first stage of the journey when our mule Lolly showed signs of illness, and we unwisely called in a village veterinary who assured us there was no cause for alarm, and wrote out a prescription.

Shortly after this noxious draught had been administered, the poor beast lay down in the inn court and died. Molly, who in ordinary circumstances would whinny incessantly if separated from her companion, took one long look at Lolly's dead body, heaved a sigh, and never called for her again.

On August 24th we reached Suchow, and immediately began the necessary preparations for the long journey ahead, in the course of which our aim was to visit every city of Kansu situated beyond the Great Wall.

We were a party of eight, including Elder and Mrs. Liu, and their little boy. In order to carry sufficient supplies we had to purchase a cart of the type peculiar to Kansu, having been made by a village carpenter

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entirely without iron, even to a single nail, in its whole structure. The great wooden wheels, which were eight feet high, lifted it bodily over the deep rivers, and the hood, which was covered with grass-matting, reminded us of a French peasant's waggon. This distinguished vehicle only cost us about fifty shillings, and was thoroughly satisfactory. Animals to draw it were more difficult to obtain. The cart-mule of Kansu seems chronically aged, lean, and sore of back. It was, consequently, a great prize to secure eventually a shaft-horse lately come from Urumchi, as it was therefore already inured to the medicinal waters of the desert oases, which are too often the cause of death to animals. On such long journeys, mules are generally much to be preferred to horses, since on arrival at the inns the former lie down in the dust immediately to roll themselves dry, and will then quietly go to their feed, requiring no further attention, whereas horses, if they are to be kept in health, demand constant care. As far as Kiayükwan the road was familiar to us, and we spent several days in that place, seeing many acquaintances made during our last visit. Tradition exacts from every traveller a curious custom, namely, that on leaving the Barrier, pebbles should be thrown against the outer side of the Great Wall, portions of which are actually worn away by the constant shower of missiles. If the traveller is to return in safety the pebble should rebound towards the thrower, but if not, it drops into the already high heap, and the man goes his way onward with a heavy heart. Owing to some obscure acoustic property, each pebble, when it hits the Wall, produces a twittering sound, something like the cheeping of little chickens! Every one heard it distinctly, and it is said to occur nowhere else.

The stones thrown by our party being satisfactorily

133 the river, a great deal of loess mixed with broken stones can immediately be seen, and for the first time since I left Hsining fu I again saw a cart. /302/ (1) The higher up I climbed on the other

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1. The boundary marking the distribution of the North Chinese two-wheel horse cart extends from here along the mountainous country I had just traversed eastward and keeps to the north of the Tsing ling pass in the North Chinese loess country. It is unknown in all of Szechwan and Kweichow, Hunan and in large parts of Hupeh.

361 side, the purer became the loess masses. At Lao tschai ni, a Chinese town, 3,015 meters high, I had already reached a typical loess village and caves in the loess. Four kilometers farther and only 250 meters lower lies the commercial city of Tao tschou, the Tibetan Batse.

It was nine o'clock and had grown dark when, with great effort and exertion, I reached the city, and ör gen, the second night watch was long past before the tormented tsung ye who in the darkness had [197] lost the path, finally discovered me. Long before that, the friendly members of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Americans Mr. and Mrs. Ruhl and Mr. and Mrs. Simpson, had found me and invited me to supper in their new home in which the former couple 000 did Tibetan missionary work and the latter, Chinese. My stay in the border city lasted from September 9 to 23 and was made pleasant by the hospitality of the missionaries who did not rest until, on the third day, I moved out of my grimy hotel and into their home outside the city. Meanwhile I discharged the caravan, paid off the servants and escort and presented the tormented tsung ye and his men with a mule and three horses, besides money and food supplies. I had never before on any of my journeys had such apt companions who were so willing to serve me. When the tsung ye said farewell his whole face lighted up and I, too, felt his relief over the fact that, in spite of my vagaries, he was able to deliver me safely at the appointed place. I sold two more mules here and only Brdyal and six animals remained. A team /hang/ of mules brought the large pieces of baggage to my depository in Lanchow fu, and my time was occupied arranging my diaries and developing my photographic plates. Only a few more than 400 plates turned out successfully on the last journey, one and one-half boxes (420 plates) were destroyed by water, while 280, all of those taken with the polyscope camera, were spoiled because they